

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

System and method for providing access to multiple wireless service providers
5 (WSPs) on a shared network infrastructure. The system includes a plurality of access
points (APs) coupled to a network which may be distributed in airports, mass-transit
stations, businesses, etc. The network may couple to a wide area network, such as the
Internet. Each AP may include a plurality of virtual APs (VAPs), each corresponding to a
WSP. A portable computing device (PCD) of a user stores identification information
10 indicating a WSP of a plurality of possible WSPs, and which may include an access level
of the user. Each AP "listens for" or detects identification information associated with
numerous WSPs. When the AP receives the identification information from the PCD, it
determines the VAP/WSP for the PCD using the identification information. Network
access is then provided to the PCD through the determined WSP at the determined access
15 level.